

INFERIOR TURBINATE SURGERY: POST-OPERATIVE CARE PLAN

Inferior turbinate surgery is usually fairly straightforward in terms of recovery. It is generally performed as a day procedure. The following is a guide to help you through the recovery period.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY:

- 1. BLEEDING:** It is normal to experience some bleeding during the first night and few days after the surgery. You will be given a nasal bolster to help absorb the mild ooze. If steady bleeding occurs, tilt your head back slightly and breathe gently through your mouth. You may dab your nose gently with a tissue, but please do not blow your nose. Stay calm. You may use a few sprays of nasal decongestant (such as Otrivin or Drixine, available over the counter from your pharmacy) in your nose to help shrink the blood vessels. Sucking on ice will also help ease the bleeding. If heavy or prolonged bleeding occurs, please contact your surgeon or present to the nearest emergency department.
- 2. PAIN:** Pain after turbinate reduction is usually mild and controlled well with paracetamol. It is best to avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as aspirin, and ibuprofen (eg. Nurofen, Advil) for 10 days after surgery to minimize the risk of bleeding.
- 3. NASAL CONGESTION:** Often patients notice immediate improvement in sense of nasal airway, though this is not universal and the nose may feel congested after surgery for a variable period of time. The congestion usually settles by 1 week.
- 4. SALINE:** Saline nasal sprays can be started after the surgery and used as frequently as necessary to moisten the nose, and help to break down mucus and minimize crusting.
- 5. ANTIBIOTICS:** These are not routinely prescribed for this surgery. Occasionally they may be prescribed for some patients, due to other considerations, and your surgeon will advise you in this case.

IN THE FIRST ONE TO TWO WEEKS:

GENERAL CARE OF YOUR NOSE: Avoid blowing your nose and straining for 1 week after your surgery. Avoid picking your nose. Ensure good ventilation during showers, keep showers short and luke warm to avoid heating up, which can increase risk of bleeding and nasal congestion.

DIET: Initially you may wish to cool foods down to room temperature to avoid nasal congestion and bleeding. Chilli may cause more nasal congestion and bleeding. Otherwise there are no dietary restrictions.

RETURN TO USUAL ACTIVITY AND WORK: Generally recovery is fairly straightforward, but we would advise avoiding heavy lifting and strenuous exercise regimens, which may precipitate bleeding. You can resume most of your usual activities by the end of one week after surgery, though you may wish to limit strenuous exercise. By 2 weeks after surgery you should be able to continue all usual activities.

SMOKING AND POLLUTION: Please refrain from smoking for 6 weeks after surgery. If your work involves significant exposure to dust, chemicals or smoke, change in work duties can be considered. Alternatively nasal filters can be helpful.

NASAL CRUSTING AND ALTERED SMELL: May occur during the recovery process and gradually improve as the nasal lining heals. Sometimes an unpleasant smell occurs due to static mucus and crusts that form over the inferior turbinate, which can be helped by use of saline sprays. Occasionally patients blow out sizeable crusts consisting of mucus and blood clot, which occurs when healing is near complete, and the scab separates from the turbinate.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT: You will normally have a return visit to our office at 2 weeks after surgery and further follow up as required until healing is complete.

(continued overleaf...)

AT ANY TIME:

1. Call our office if you experience any of the following:
 - Brisk bleeding from your nose or mouth
 - Severe pain, unresponsive to prescribed analgesics
 - Persistent fever
 - Foul smell

2. If you need to contact someone after hours, our mobile phone numbers can be found on our answering service, in the White Pages, and on the paperwork provided to you pre-operatively. In an emergency, please dial 000 for an ambulance to your nearest hospital.